

duties in the passenger area to augment the efforts of the State Governments, RPF has also been empowered to deal with the minor offences affecting the train operations such as alarm chain pulling, roof travel, touting, ticketless travel, unauthorized entry into coaches earmarked for ladies etc. (except Sabotage related offences under Sections 150 to 152) with the amendment to the Railway Act, 1989 w.e.f. July 2004. During the year 2006, RPF have apprehended 49 offenders responsible for looting of passengers after drugging them and forwarded to the concerned GRP for further legal action. The following preventive measures are also being taken to combat such menace:—

1. Repeated announcement is made at Railway Stations to create awareness amongst the passengers not to take any food/drinks/ tea etc. from unknown passengers.
2. Wide publicity in the local and leading newspapers as well as TV is also being given.
3. Signages in local language are being displayed in trains as well as on station platforms.
4. Pamphlets are also being distributed among the passengers to create awareness.
5. Close coordination with GRP and local police are being maintained to exchange information regarding criminals indulging in such act.
6. Photographs of habitual offenders are pasted at Stations platforms in Rogue's Gallery.

Retirement of commission vendors

381. SHRI PRASANTA CHATTERJEE: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that a number of commission vendors have been served with retirement orders, along with bearers;
- (b) if so, what were their terms and conditions of appointment orders;

(c) under which railway service rules, the retirement orders were issued; and

(d) what retirement benefits are being given to the vendors and bearers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (d) Commission bearers/vendors were engaged by the Zonal Railways at divisional level locally to attend work pertaining to Departmental catering units and they were paid commission only. They were not railway employees. However, in terms of Hon'ble supreme Court's directions in 1986 in a Writ Petition filed by Shri T.I. Madhavan and others, these commission bearers/vendors are to be absorbed in Railways in group "D" as and when vacancies arise. Accordingly, their absorption are being made by the Railways as per the terms and condition for such absorption in Group "D" posts. However, Board after examining the slow progress in their absorption, allowed certain relaxation in regard to age, educational qualification etc. as on 1.4.2005 and also prescribed the disengagement age of commission bearers/vendors who completed 60 years of age vide Board's letter dated: 1.12.2005. Those commission bearers/vendors who are absorbed in Railways are eligible for all such retirement benefits at par with railway employees as per extant guidelines.

Bullet train

382. SHRI C. PERUMAL: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is proposed to introduce bullet trains between Chennai-Madurai and Chennai-Coimbatore;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Introduction of Bullet Trains require separate dedicated infrastructure and massive investments with relatively low returns and is not a priority at present.